

# **Towards a Supra-national and Cosmopolitan Sovereignty: For the Planet's Organisation and Peace<sup>\*</sup>**

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## **1. Supra-national and Cosmopolitan explicit objectives for the Left**

Globalisation is not only a present-day condition. It is, above all, an objective and a value affirming the universality of the human race. It is what allows us to hope, with the arrival of a new millennium, to establish around the world an epoch of authentic peace and cultural integration under the banner of universal human values.

For the historic Left, globalisation allows us to establish an epoch of authentic socialist internationalism founded on equality, co-operation, and brotherhood – and unimpeded by narrow visions of ethnicity, race or creed.

The will to preserve the heritage of cultural identities in all parts of the world should not induce us to sacrifice the principle and values of the current democratic and liberal revolution – a revolution which represents the apex (up to now) of the political and cultural progress of the human spirit (and which is also – after all – the matrix of the same will to respect and preserve those cultural identities which we are concerned with).

To attain this objective, to pursue the purpose of entering a global epoch, we need to implement two basic strategies:

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1. We must seek to enlarge a secular vision of the world – that inherited by the greater democratic and liberal revolution, and reinforced by the world organisation of nations and peoples, and by the establishment of a “declaration” of human rights at a universal scale.
2. We must seek to continually strengthen the governmental and judicial institutions at the world scale, with the acceptance of the transfer to that scale of quotas or portions of political, ethical, and juridical sovereignty – sovereignty until now stuck at a ‘national scale,’ the scale experienced during the last two centuries, which have been centuries of both amazing scientific and technical progress, as well as centuries of bloody political and social catastrophes.

Today we possess sufficient historical proof to know how much ‘national’ sovereignty – although it accompanied (during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in western countries and during this century in ex-colonial countries) fights for freedom, for the constitutionality of the political regimes, and for overcoming authoritarian legitimacy based on political and/or religious fundamentalism – has also been in the history of individual nations, a deadly bearer of senseless wars, slaughter, genocide, and ‘fundamentalist’ extremism. Historically, the Left has been a strong (if not always consistent) opponent of any ‘nationalism,’ and a proud flag-bearer of ‘internationalist’ values. Today, with these values increasingly expressed in the present realities and circumstances, the historic Left must again reaffirm these values and place its political project under them. The Left must actively update the Project’s values to today’s existing operational opportunities.

With the new epoch, we have to definitively eradicate war – from the history of mankind – as a means of regulating international conflict. But this will be possible not through sermons always given throughout the darkest centuries from places and pulpits of various kinds, but by installing and strengthening political and supra-national institutions, capable

of managing problems – until now managed only by ‘national sovereignties’ (with the help of consequent *inter*-national ‘agreements’ and/or related ‘diplomatic’ activities) – at the jurisdictional level of a ‘supra-national sovereignty.’

Therefore the Left must address itself towards strengthening such a ‘supra-national sovereignty,’ which means, therefore, working to limit national sovereignty by affirming the concept of ‘limited national sovereignty.’ Our epoch, in other words, must be marked by a sort of ‘organised cosmopoly’ – which was the dream of eighteenth century thinkers who lay the foundation of the western liberal and democratic revolution; they dreamt of a World Federal Republic, which, after the long historical parenthesis of the creation of nation-states during the last two centuries, is today within reach of all people of the Earth at the dawn of the third millennium.

The Left must show itself to be capable of not losing this historic opportunity, which will not soon occur again – if we should plunge back into a past of national barriers, political realities could easily degenerate into fundamentalism and totalitarian nationalism, and we could risk being exposed to a new era of world conflict even greater than that suffered until now.

## **2. The Transformation of the United Nations**

To affirm this ‘supra-national sovereignty,’ a secure means of guaranteeing peace and secular progress through civilised international co-existence, the progressive Left must become a defender and supporter of the United Nations, and of the UN’s transformation into the role of an authentic ‘supra-national sovereign entity.’ However, the march toward this objective will be strewn with difficulties, obstacles and risks.

We know that the large differences in political education, productive and income capacity, and habits, among the nations

of the world, especially between the so-called North and South of the World, will make it very difficult to transform the United Nations into a body, or entity, capable of exercising a true and secure 'supra-national sovereignty,' and capable, above all, of guaranteeing the values and principles of the liberal and democratic revolution at the world scale. There are still too many countries that – although included in the United Nations family – remain current victims of non-democratic principles, values, and ideologies, for the democratic countries to risk being overcome by 'numerical democracy.' This is the reason to recommend caution and step-by-step incremental authorisation in the formal 'United Nations democratisation process.'

This is also why it is desirable – in order to perform as soon as possible this substantial 'United Nations democratisation process' – that the military might of the desired 'supra-national entity' be guaranteed by the international community of countries which have given secure, historical evidence of their democratic maturity, i.e. those countries that have demonstrated a continuous and prolonged democratic stability, a public opinion rooted in pluralism, and a secular vision of the international relationship. Historically we mean the international community of countries which created NATO as a security instrument of the United Nations, allowing the UN to enlarge itself with greater confidence toward world democratisation without risk of a paralysis that, within the UN, has been produced in all moments of acute world crises, by countries with imperfect and scarcely democratic regimes.

Certainly, according to the principles and values of the 'supra-nationality' we hope for, even NATO must be progressively transformed. It must be transformed overall to reflect the collapse of the 'Berlin Wall' and of the 'Cold War,' and the fall of those anti-democratic pseudo-communist regimes which have been vehemently rejected through the uprisings of the people which they pretended to represent. In light of these events, NATO must be progressively enlarged to incorporate ex-

totalitarian countries and ex-nationalistic regimes of any kind of colour - of the right, as well as the pseudo-Left (the 'true' Left by historic definition is never 'reactionary;' if and when it degenerates and betrays the principles of the democracy from which it was born, it becomes, then, only a 'pseudo' Left) - until it becomes, along with the UN itself, adequately transformed and democratised.

The new and progressive Left must make NATO's progressive transformation one of its principle objectives.

However we must reiterate that time and circumstances of this transformation as a political objective of the Left – of the true Left – will be determined by the time and manner in which the security of the world democratic community matures; a security attained by extinguishing the remaining embers of ex-communist and ex-nationalist democracies, as well as smothering the emerging flames of totalitarian regimes in the third world. In other words, this security will mature by reinforcing the democratic front throughout the world.

Unfortunately, among the persisting differences in political cultures is that very few southern countries of the world manifest signs of a consolidated democratic maturity. In these countries democracy is weak and intermittent, and susceptible to various types of totalitarian, populist, authoritarian, military and/or religious regimes which deny those universal, essentially pluralistic principles of the UN and the various charters on which it is founded.

The transformation and democratisation of the United Nations will proceed more rapidly when the remnants of nationalist and pseudo-communist nostalgia – which reappear under the guise of 'national sovereignty' in ex-totalitarian countries during every international crisis – are defeated. It is not by accident that in the recent episode of international crisis, all the anti-democratic political currents and symbols of the past: nationalist and fundamentalist, communist and Christian loyalist, the orthodox cross and the effigy of Stalin, from Moscow to Belgrade, from Rome to Athens – all appeared to

unite against the intervention of the UN and NATO. What certainty can we have for the future of the United Nations as long as such a culture persists?

But fifty years after its promulgation, the Declaration of Human Rights can now serve as a point of reference for reinforcing – with its imperfect and uncertain, but progressive and necessary procedures – ‘supra-national sovereignty.’

In this age of globalisation, if one doesn’t introduce the most advanced and decisive (if partial) elements of ‘supra-national sovereignty,’ one risks seeing the world fall into a situation of perpetual and widespread conflict a great deal more threatening of the major catastrophes which we believe to avoid by preserving the unstable balance based on the existing national sovereignties. It is not by accident that upon this preserved equilibrium were joined and combined the conservative western policies of the supporters of the ‘Realpolitik’ (like that of Kissinger or the Italian Andreotti, for example,) and third world supporters of regressive nationalism under the banner of opposing so called American ‘imperialist’ interference, and much crypto-nationalism which persists in the European area, where, as we well know, various reactionary anti-democratic visions are still harboured (racist, libertarian, populist, regionalist, separatist, quite different from ‘federalist’).

The progressive and internationalist Left, on the contrary, must support the United Nations’ role as the bastion in defence of the people and international rights, and also support, therefore, the UN role and right of political humanitarian ‘interference.’ The wars of the UN – and of the organisms that explicitly or implicitly appeal to it – are not ‘wars’: they are ‘international policing operations.’ Countries that oppose this role for one reason or another, are countries that renounce the creation of the one effective means in the fight against war which can be put today in the hands of humanity. And it is not by accident that such countries, for the most part, are also the countries which, historically, have not even managed within

their borders to guarantee liberty and democracy, to guarantee not to violate the universal human rights of their own citizens!

UN 'international policing operations' have been sharply criticised in the past because they have not always been developed when and where the same necessary conditions occurred. This is true; the UN has not decisively intervened in some situations which deserved, in principle, the same commitment as the situations in which it has intervened.

But in which cases has it not intervened? They are almost all cases in which the 'Cold War' impeded intervention for one of two reasons:

1. Either because human rights violations occurred in countries allied with western democracies, and strategic security reasons induced the western democracies to compromise in order not to weaken these allied regimes and risk losing them to the opposing anti-democratic front.
2. Or, on the other hand, because human rights violations occurred within countries allied with the opposed anti-democratic front and intervention was impeded not only by the veto of the anti-democratic front itself, but the western democracies were induced to compromise in order not to upset the precarious equilibrium of the 'Cold War' itself.

Today, while the 'Cold War' has vanished, it is necessary to rigorously counteract its psychological effect and to support co-operation among all truly democratic countries within the UN organisation. In any case, people should reject criticism when it comes precisely from the supporters of the positions that in the 'Cold War' were opposed to the democratic front, positions that were the *raison d'être* of the compromise, i.e. for contravening the intervention requirements of the UN.

Thus it is recommended that all forces sincerely in favour of humanitarian intervention by the UN, align themselves (without indulging in obscure and suspect discourse) in support of greater UN interference, as needed, in the affairs of national sovereignty.

### **3. An adequate application of the Federalist concept and of the subsidiarity principle at a cosmopolitan scale.**

The reaffirmation and reinforcement of ‘supra-national sovereignty’ of the UN is based on the reaffirmation of the ‘subsidiarity principle’ at all extensions and levels, from that of a single person or family to that of the highest levels of world institutions.

This subsidiarity principle – properly intended – implies that one ought to interfere in the decisional freedom of lower institutions *only if* the interests and values at stake *extend beyond* the interests of people at the lower scale (who would best be served by the corresponding lower institution, without external interference or useless superior imposition), and concern people’s values and interests at a superior scale, for example: acceptance of human rights, of basic needs (hunger, epidemics, literacy, etc.), the health of the Earth (environmental heritage, global warming, pollution, nuclear risk), and all the things that with technological progress have emerged as broader, ‘interdependent’ human concerns.

If one wants to ensure that the ‘strongest’ countries, i.e., the more economically and technologically advanced, do not take advantage of this interdependence by means of a possible ‘unequal exchange’ process (in which the real beneficiaries and the real benefactors are still unanswered questions subject to definition and debate – beyond existing prejudices and established propaganda, much of which has since been historically disproven), it is in the interests of the weakest countries to not return to a dangerous ‘national sovereignty’ of dubious and uncomfortable management, but instead to integrate themselves into a world system of securities and rights, founded on an adequate enduring ‘supra-nationality.’



In fact, this superior level of sovereignty is a guarantee for the same national sovereignty and the national governments concerned. This superior level not only permits populations and victims of alleged or lamentable abuses to appeal to some body against the violation of basic human rights by the government that exercises this sovereignty; but could allow the same government unjustly accused of these violations to appeal to an international arbitrator on the fairness or veracity of these accusations. The system would not be closed, as in the case of an entrenched defence of national sovereignty to the bitter end, thereby creating a wall of incommunicability and non-democratic relations between people, countries, and governments. Instead, the system would be open to ensure verification, fairness, and understanding.

This subsidiarity principle, again, in its very essence, postulates applying the subsidium – not only in juridical issues (human rights), but also in economic issues (human needs) – from a superior level to the inferior level, when the inferior level is not sufficiently able by itself to achieve the objectives for that level. In the case of universal human rights, the principle postulates the right of non-intervention when these rights are guaranteed and performed, and the right of intervention when they are not. But who judges when conflicts are created? We need an evaluative body – of discussion, assessment and arbitration – at a federal, overarching superior scale. This has been done and is done in American federalism, which – while honouring the independence of individual states – doesn't hesitate to exercise its central (federal) weight and power in many ways – from rulings of the Court to enforcement by federal troops – when it faces a violation of the constitutional principles (not only in the field of human rights). And this has been done and is done in other numerous cases faced by the United Nations.

The subsidiarity principle conceived in such a way, i.e. in its extended and integrated version (and not only in partial or unilateral forms), requires therefore, a *federalist vision* of the

international and inter-institutional relationship, which stretches from the universal world scale on one side, to individual personal rights on the other side. Today, in the acknowledged age of globalisation, it is possible and it is our duty to declare – for the first time in mankind’s history – the subsidiarity principle and thus the federalism which is inherent to it, at a universal cosmopolitan and community scale, bridging that Charter of Human Rights which constitutes the first and still very valid instrument of affirmation and declaration. At the same time we must ensure its implementation through many other decisions that establish a managerial competence at this cosmopolitan scale capable of implementing policies and actions until now assured only at a national scale.

The Left, the political force which strives for social change and progress, must make this (international and ‘internationalist’) principle the banner of its own rigorous political performance in any situation and circumstance, without partiality or opportunistic compromise, and without indulging in partisan or simplistic visions of a national, ethnic, religious, or ideological nature.

Therefore, if on one side the Left must be the bearer of respect for all identities – including those of national, ethnic, and religious natures, in a truly secular and pluralist concept of co-habitation and co-existence at a cosmopolitan scale – it must from the other side also feel itself engaged to defend any one of those identities when their rights are in risk of being denied or repressed. In the name of all of these mentioned identities we should never permit the repression of personal fundamental rights; and interference should be made not only in the name of humanitarian motivations, but also in the name of cosmopolitan political and institutional rights, in the affairs of any so-called ‘national’ entity even when it appears sustained by a numerical majority.

This is the reason why the progressive Left should become an active promoter of world institutions capable of protecting and intervening with any means against the secular violation of

rights in the international community – rights which also include protection of those same identities, in whose name, sometimes, these violations are especially committed. For example, it is difficult to fight adequately against terrorism (which unfortunately is manifest, very often, when nation states commit these violations in their own territory) without introducing for all bloody conflicts internal to any sovereign state, the possibility of a third intervention by, and in the name of, an independent ‘supra-national’ and cosmopolitan sovereignty.

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